Ideals

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Ideals

BY

MINNIE P. NICOLLS

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Where now are our ideals? You say they fled
With old-time leisure; but we have instead
The maddening rush for what men call success—
Sad world indeed where all ideals are dead.

Nay, nay, not dead, but stifled: lack of air
And nourishment has checked the blossoms fair;
Wealth, social prestige, ease—the world's loud cry—
How shall heroic purpose flourish there?

So vast, so multitudinous our cares,
They crowd these days of ours, and, unawares,
The beauty and the bloom of life are gone—
Slipped from our grasp amid the crowd of cares.

How shall we win back all that we have lost?
(From one new craze unto another tost)
Our visions high, our faith in all things good,
How shall we gain those better things we lost?

Back to the simpler, sweeter ways of life,
Now, as the old year closes with its strife.
Let us strive only for the things worth while;
Back—back once more to simpler modes of life!

How clean and fair the new year's pages shine!
Let us not mar their whiteness—nor repine
O'er vanities and failures of the past;
Let us go forward in the strength Divine.

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Christmas Eve.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

One thought this night, in lands both far and near,
Men's hearts to brotherhood and love are leaning ;
The blessed Christmastide is here ;
Oh, can we carry through the year
Its meaning ?

Now—mellow-toned and slow,
The bells peal forth their melody bewitching ;
O hearts of men, with Christmas cheer aglow,
In His dear name, Who stooped for your enriching,
Each low, unworthy aim
Let go.

As in the long ago
This is a time of universal gladness ;
O, souls of men, if ye would nobler grow,
Your crooked ways, your money-making madness,
Now—on this peaceful eve,
Let go.

A childish tale ? ah, no ;
What myth has ever wrought a sick world's healing ?
O, minds of men, perplexed and wearied so,
To higher ends train intellect and feeling,
And all dishonest doubt
Let go.

Still—o'er the moonlit snow
The sound of Christmas bells is softly drifting;
O, hearts of men, with Christmas cheer aglow,
Pledge yourselves henceforth for the world's uplifting,
And each unworthy aim
Let go.

A Song of Canada.

A SONG OF CANADA.

A song to the Land of the Maple!
A toast to Old England's pride,
The land for whose wealth and freedom our
fathers wrought side by side.

I love this great free Canada of ours,
Wherein a man may breathe the kindly air,
Nor fear to trespass on his neighbour's share;
Where lives disheartened—crushed amid the stress
Of circumstance, may find a wider scope,
Where high and low, with equal chance, may hope
To win success.

A toast to the Land of the Maple!
A song for her loyalty
To the flag of our world-wide empire that floats
over every sea!

I love this Canada from East to West,
Although the West may fairer promise hold
Of vast resources and of wealth untold;
I love her prairies where the wind sweeps free,
Her forests, canyons, snow peaks, tow'ring grand.
Methinks that all who dwell in such a land
Should heroes be.

A song to the Land of the Maple,
A toast to Old England's pride,
The land for whose wealth and freedom our
fathers have fought and died!

Join Hands, Ye Anglo-Saxons.

JOIN HANDS, YE ANGLO-SAXONS.

Awake ye scattered peoples of the English-speaking race!
For lo, before the world ye hold a high and honored place;
Let every quarrel be forgot; in friendship, side by side,
Join hands, ye Anglo-Saxons—far and wide.

Declare that Mammon-worshipping and greed shall never more
Darken the record of your race as they have done before;
Together stand for righteousness, for world-wide liberty;
Join hands in comradeship across the sea.

For peace among the nations all your differences subdue,
Strengthen the fine-wrought chains that bind the Old World to the New;
That never brothers of one blood be into battle hurled,
Clasp hands, ye Anglo-Saxons, round the world!

Poems of Nature.

A QUESTION.

Have you felt your spirit kindle
With the storm's deep roar,
When the breakers boom in thunder
On the shore?

Have you e'er, when day is ended,
Paused on cliff or heath-crowned height,
Drinking in the moonlit splendor
Of the night?

Have you watched the summer sunrise
With a heartfelt prayer
That *your* life might cast a radiance
Just as fair?

Have you hushed your heart, forgetting
All the babble of the throng
In the sweetness of the thrushes'
Evensong?

When the foam-flecked blue of ocean
Bursts upon your sight,
Thrilling, flooding all your senses
With delight,

Tell me, does its wind-swept vastness
Break the spell of care and strife,
Urging you toward a fuller,
Freer life?

If you can without a heart-pang
  Fashion's whirl forego
For the richer joys that Nature
        Can bestow,

Then to you will Nature whisper,—
  Whisper in the clear star-shine,
All the wonder of her secrets,
        Deep—divine.

MY PHILOSOPHY.

Because I know, thro' dull November days,
'Mid biting frosts and many a chill, bleak morn,
The Springtime—sweetest pledge of all the year,
Is slowly born,

Oh, then I welcome Winter with his stern
And bracing test ('tis Nature's wondrous plan),
Knowing unclouded sunshine cannot best
Develop man.

Because I know thro' winds of March that keen
About me blow, through April sun and showers,
Comes Summer, with her radiant, ripened glow,
Her 'witching hours,

Therefore I take with gladness each event
The years may hold—of failure or success
Knowing Life's mysteries must soon unfold
In loveliness.

IN TUNE WITH NATURE.

In the freshness of the Spring
When the world seems all reborn and buds
are slowly swelling,
Rouse thy earth-bound soul to see
All that Nature offers thee ;
Oh, the joys beyond all telling
In the freshness of the Spring
When the buds are swelling!

When the Autumn, crisp and clear,
Wakes the tingle in the blood, and leaves to
gold are turning,
Brace thyself afresh to know
Life is not all Summer glow ;
Wondrous lessons for thy learning
Lie in Autumn woodlands sere,
When the leaves are turning.

Then, dear heart, when Winter's gloom,
Borne on cloud and tempest drear, proclaims
the old year's waning,
Bravely turn to meet the new
With a spirit poised and true,
Courage for thy future gaining
In the depth of Winter's gloom
When the year is waning.

Seventy-Two.

SEVENTY-TWO.

Give me the old-fashioned flowers
  Round which my memory plays;
Give me the homelier flowers that breathe
  The sweetness of bygone days.
Young hearts ever covet the strange and the new,
But old things are dearer at seventy-two.

Give me the old-fashioned flowers,
  All that fine culture disdains;
Bring me the cowslip and primrose fair
  That grow in our English lanes.
Ah, me! for the thyme-scented downs that we know
When thirty your summers and mine twenty-two.

Give me the old-fashioned flowers,
  Mignonette mixed with musk,
Jasmine, sweetbriar and lavender, too,
  Sweet scents for the summer dusk;
And "lad's love" you brought when you swore
  to be true,
I hold it still dearer at seventy-two.

Leave us the old-fashioned flowers,—
  Calm—in our feverish strife,
Courtesy, reverence, respect for the old—
  That bloomed in the dear home-life;
For these do I plead as the old folks must do,
Oh, priceless their fragrance at seventy-two!

A Debt of Honor.

A DEBT OF HONOR.

My friend, I'd have you know,
If ever you have some great sorrow met
And overcome, or solved some problem set
In life's great lesson-book, you owe a debt
(A priceless one) to mortals here below.

Stand not henceforth apart
From those, your fellows, battling on in vain;
Worth while indeed the discipline, the pain,
If they have qualified you to explain
Life's lovely meaning unto some sore heart.

Then fearlessly reveal
The truth your heart has learned; its clear-toned ring
May stir the winter of some soul to spring,
Till doubt shall die, and gloomy questioning.
Oh Godlike gift! Life's bitterness to heal.

Love's Triumph.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH.

Oh, I can ne'er forget
The ripple of the sea that summer morn,
The waves, low-whispering at our very feet;
How gentle was the breeze, how softly blue
The sky,—the roses that you wore, how sweet!
And yet,
It seemed to me like dreariest November,
That day we quarrelled, Love,— do you remember?

And when, by chance, we met
Once more on that December afternoon,
How dull the narrow street, the dingy square!
Cold was the drizzling rain and dense the fog
That, like a pall, hung darkly everywhere!
And yet,
For *me* the sun shone with a thrill of May,
When you forgave me, Dear—that winter's day.

Still less can I forget
That wild March morning, when the bitter wind
Howled round the dim old church where we were wed;
How fierce the sleet,—how dark with sullen gloom
The disapproving storm-cloud overhead!
And yet,
My heart was flooded with the summertide
When we began life's journey side by side.

Since the glad day we met
Full many a chill December have we known,
Rough winds of March, November fog and rain,
The fickle April day of sun and shade,
The storm of sorrow, the long night of pain!
And yet,
The summer glow has never passed us by,—
For we are sweethearts still, Love,—you and I.

"Man is a Pilgrim journeying toward the New and Beautiful City of the Ideal. Aspiration, not Contentment, is the Law of his Life. Earth knows no Tragedy like the Death of the Soul's Ideals. Therefore, battle for them as for Life itself."

NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS.

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